

YALI Voices: Creating a Personal Volunteer Development Plan (PVDP)

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What is a Personal Volunteer Development Plan (PVDP)?

A PVDP is a document created by a volunteer to articulate his or her vision, goals, skills and passion in order to choose the most relevant volunteer opportunity.

Why do you need a PVDP?

As a volunteer you need a PVDP because it helps you:

1. Understand why you are volunteering.
2. List what you have to offer in terms of skills and time.
3. Articulate what you hope to learn from every volunteering experience.
4. Choose the volunteer opportunity that is the best fit for you. That is an opportunity that is in line with your passion, requires the skills you already have, enables you to learn the skills you desire, and is in line with your vision and long- or short-term goals.
5. Evaluate your vision, goals and plans for the future as it relates to your career and personal development.

The PVDP can also be used for career development – to help you evaluate your career goals, the skills you need to learn to help you achieve those goals, and to help you find relevant volunteer opportunities where you can learn those skills and advance in your career.

How to Create Your Own PVDP?

Creating a PVDP is not as difficult as it sounds. We have broken it down into seven simple steps. Let's walk through them together.

1. Write down your vision. What do you hope to achieve with your life, what do you hope to help create, what problem do you want to help solve, or what career do you want to build? It is important to note that this vision does not have to be fixed. As you grow, your vision might change, so do not burden yourself with having to “know it all” to write this down.
2. Set the short- and long-term goals you need to achieve to make your vision possible. Make sure to set SMART — Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound — goals.
3. List all the skills you need to have to achieve all your goals and make your vision come to life. After listing all the skills needed, note the skills you already have, the ones you need to improve on and others you need to acquire.
4. List the areas of service or career paths that you are most passionate about. What problems, jobs, or areas do you feel very strongly about and would enjoy doing without pay? For example, you could be passionate about youth development or women's empowerment, accounting, media or other areas.

5. Define what kind of impact will make you feel fulfilled. This is usually in line with your passion and most times related to your vision and goals. For example, you can be passionate about women's empowerment, and the kind of impact that will make you fulfilled could be to see more women have access to startup capital, new business skills or other resources.
6. Define how much time you have to dedicate to volunteering, and at what frequency. For example, if you have a day job, you might be able to dedicate four hours on the weekend for the next six months.
7. Describe your ideal volunteer opportunity. To do this, answer these questions: At what kind of organization would you like to volunteer? What would you like to do at the organization? What would you like to learn on the job? A sample answer could read: "I would like to volunteer at an educational organization where I could teach mathematics to less-privileged children and in the process sharpen up my communication and interpersonal skills." This exercise will help in your search for volunteer opportunities and help you get the best out of the one you select.

To help you in developing your PVDP, we have created [a template](#) that you can use.

One important point to note is that your PVDP is a living document that you will revisit and revise as situations change.
